



FEMA

A Small Village With Big Concerns

Riverton, IL – The Sangamon River forms the west boundary of the Village of Riverton, a quaint community that 2,997 residents refer to as home. But the Village of Riverton has had a long flood history. To lessen the impact of floods on its residents, the village joined forces with other communities in Sangamon County to devise a plan. Acquisition was definitely the mitigation measure of choice, and council members have encouraged the creation of green space in floodplain area.

“This was the second time these homes were hit. The first time was in 1994,” said Linda Viola, Office Manager and Grant Administrator for the Village of Riverton. “We knew that something needed to be done.”

Riverton is 550 feet above sea level. The village has a total area of 2.1-square miles: 2-square miles of land and 0.04-square miles of water (1.93 percent). Heavy rainfall causes the creek, which runs through the middle of the Riverton, to frequently overtop its banks.

The Acquisition Project was initiated in July 2002 and completed in August 2006. Riverton received a grant totaling \$272, 867.66 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP pays 75 percent of approved projects that will prevent or reduce damage from storms and other natural hazards. These grants are made available for both public and private projects.

“We filled out all the grant information and we notified the homeowners. They also knew that they had a choice,” said Viola. “They could choose to participate or not. Participation is voluntary. We completed the project without any major problems.”

Continued Viola, “When you buy someone's home, they always think that it's worth more. There were some who disagreed with the appraisal. The properties were appraised a second time. The homeowner has a right to request a second appraisal.”

Buyouts of floodprone homes located near the Sangamon River began in July 2004. The average value was \$75,000 and total project cost was \$376,048.66. The village acquired six homes that were demolished, resulting in open space within the floodplain.

A June 2008 flood event tested the success of the acquisition project as waters from the Sangamon River crept upon the 140,506-acre tract of land, now void of homes. Water rose six feet above flood stage. It was estimated that the water would have reached at least two to three feet inside the six homes had they not been acquired.

A local alderman reportedly contacted the State Hazard Mitigation Officer Ron Davis who acknowledged, “It was great this year when the waters came up, [and we were] able to sit back and relax and not have to mobilize our forces to fight the flood.”

“Those [acquired] homes were in the floodplain. Flooding would continue to occur,” said Viola. “I don't know how the people could have lived with the flood and continue to rebuild in the same area, knowing that it would happen again. We found a way to help them.”



Sangamon County,
Illinois



Quick Facts

Year:

2002

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$376,048.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)